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**USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)
Supplemental Guidance for Partners Engaging in Food
Security Activities in Syria**

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Introduction

Now in its eighth year, the humanitarian crisis in Syria has led to the internal displacement of at least 5.9 million people, and left an estimated 13 million in need of humanitarian assistance. According to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) Food Security Sector 2018 Mid-Year Review, food security further deteriorated during the first six months of 2018, with the number of food insecure people increasing from 6.5 million to 6.7 million. The number of people at risk of food insecurity has also grown, from 4 million to 4.5 million, bringing the total up to 11.2 million Syrians who need of urgent life-saving and life-sustaining food and livelihoods assistance.

Insecurity and conflict are among the major drivers of food insecurity in Syria, causing widespread, often multiple displacement and constraining physical access to food and markets. Vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities, single headed households, and the elderly often face particular challenges physically accessing food, for reasons ranging from a lack of mobility to threats to their physical safety. In many communities, an influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees contribute to socio-economic pressures that also create vulnerabilities for host communities. This is particularly true in urban areas, which host roughly 84 percent of all IDPs in Syria.

Food insecurity in Syria is also driven by a lack of financial access, as high food prices, low purchasing power, and the collapse of income earning opportunities have hampered most Syrians' ability to acquire food. These challenges are reflected in a heavy reliance on negative coping strategies, a lack of dietary diversity, and significant gaps in food consumption. Among conflict-affected households, inflation, market disruptions, and the extreme loss or depletion of productive assets all contribute to the economic challenges to either purchasing or producing food. The agricultural sector, which normally serves as a major engine of the economy and a source of cheaper, more abundant food, is also threatened by factors such as land contamination, lack of availability of and/or financial means to access essential inputs, and damaged infrastructure. These factors have created a food system that is highly vulnerable to climatic stresses such as drought and rainfall anomalies.

FFPs ongoing response in Syria faces a host of specific contextual challenges related to features such as insecurity and a lack of access, remote management of humanitarian operations, hostilities, IDPs in densely populated urban areas, and complex protection risks among beneficiaries. This guidance is intended to address some of the challenges that make operations in Syria unique, while fulfilling USAID/FFP's global mission to provide food assistance to save lives, reduce suffering, and support the early recovery of populations affected by both acute and

protracted emergencies. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the [Emergency Food Security Program](#) requirements found in the current Annual Program Statement (APS) for International Emergency Food Assistance, and not be used in isolation. Please see additional *Application and Submission Guidance* for the Syria response below. Further, this guidance applies only to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and not to Public International Organizations (PIOs).

Emergency Food Security Program resources can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/food-assistance/what-we-do/emergency-activities>

Key Areas of USAID/FFP Focus

Monthly food security assistance to the most vulnerable households. To support food insecure households due to conflict, lack of physical and financial access to food, and depletion of livelihood assets, USAID/FFP will continue to consider applications for targeted monthly food assistance to through the most appropriate modality including locally and regionally procured (LRP) in-kind food baskets as well as targeted cash and voucher assistance (CVA) for food. Applicants should indicate their flexibility, where feasible, to shift between modalities based on inconsistent cross-border access, changing market trends, shifting conflict lines, and areas of operation. Applicants proposing LRP must demonstrate organizational capacity and experience procuring, packaging, transporting and delivering food baskets in the Syrian context. Applicants must also demonstrate experience in food safety and quality control. Applicants proposing CVA programs should submit their standard operating procedures for cash and voucher assistance and market-based analyses demonstrating CVAs are appropriate for their area of operation. Applicants must demonstrate proven experience in successfully implementing cash and voucher assistance programs in Syria or other similar remote management environment and detail the complete chain of custody, including voucher control following redemption by the beneficiary, as relevant for voucher programs.

Restoring livelihoods and agricultural production to improve economic access to household food security. FFP will support efforts to promote livelihoods in Syria as a means of restoring productive assets, enhancing self-reliance, and more sustainably improving household food security. As a source of both income and food, activities targeting agricultural livelihood strategies will be prioritized, including increasing access to and availability of essential quality inputs, animal husbandry as well as horticultural and crop production at a range of scales from the homestead to the field. As per the current APS, USAID/FFP will respond to identified needs by providing targeted assistance packages that include critical inputs such as seeds, tools, and/or fodder. All agricultural distribution activities should include a training component that addresses culturally appropriate production techniques and sustainable resource management practices.

FFP will also consider non-agricultural livelihood activities designed to create income earning opportunities for vulnerable and food insecure households who have depleted households assets

and lack economic access to food. For guidance refer to *Complementary Food Security Programming*, in the FY 2019 APS. Applicants proposing “for work” activities or income generating activities to improve household food security should refer to FFP guidance outlining suitable types of emergency Cash-for-Work (CFW), Food-for Work, Cash-for-Assets, and Food-for-Assets activities for USAID funding in humanitarian contexts. See [*FFP Supplemental Guidance for "For Work" Emergency Activities*](#).

FFP Supplemental Guidance for “For Work” Emergency Activities can be found here: <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1866/food-peace-supplemental-guidance-work-emergency-activities>

Applicants proposing emergency livelihoods interventions must demonstrate that the areas selected for these activities are reasonably stable and not expected to see large scale conflict or displacement that will put programmatic assets at risk of destruction, seizure, or abandonment. Furthermore, applicants should demonstrate evidence of due diligence that verifies land and property rights before initiating livelihoods activities.

Rapid Response Mechanisms to provide emergency food assistance. To support widespread displacements, including multiple displacements, due to the on-going insecurity and hostilities USAID/FFP will continue to consider activities for in-kind, ready-to-eat emergency rations (RTERs) for the newly displaced, which may be complemented by short term in-kind or cash-based emergency food assistance. As with other modalities, USAID/FFP expects applicants to harmonization of RTERs and short term emergency food assistance with the FSL Cluster assistance packages and norms. USAID/FFP supports emergency food assistance as part of a multi-sectoral humanitarian response and will consider cash and voucher assistance based on the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB). For guidance refer *Multipurpose Cash Assistance* section in the FY 2019 APS.

Bakery interventions to increase the supply of bread as well as access to bread at a stabilized market price. To support food insecure households due to conflict, lack of physical and financial access to food, and increased community bread needs due to IDP patterns, USAID/FFP will support market based bakery interventions targeted to vulnerable communities. Applicants must demonstrate how these activities are intended to support food security through increasing the supply of and access to bread at a stabilized price, in particular to changing community demands for bread (i.e., medium to large scale IDP flows). USAID/FFP will consider the provision of local and regional flour and yeast to bakeries inside Syria as well inputs and financing for maintenance, minor repairs of bakeries and mills, as appropriate. Applicants should clearly justify their selection of proposed geographic areas, including assessment of community vulnerability and needs. Applicants should also provide information on their bakery selection criteria, including information on catchment population, current bakery production including other source(s) of flour, total production capacity, storage capacity, power supply and an analysis

of the bakery's economic viability. Applicants should outline how they intend to encourage competition and develop agreements or contracts with bakeries that will clearly articulate the conditions of assistance and how bread prices will be determined and adjusted throughout program implementation. Applicants should include information on the bakeries use of revenue collected from bread sales (e.g., reinvested into the bakery, used for maintenance, used to purchase local flour, etc.). Proposed USAID/FFP-supported flour/bakery programs should respond to identified needs of communities affected by the crisis, and should be distinct from flour/bakery programs primarily designed to strengthen local authorities.

USAID/FFP seeks applicants for short—3 to 6 months— and medium—12 months—term bakery support, with a flexible response to shift resources as supply and demand change due to population movements and increased geographic access. USAID/FFP will consider activities that provide up to 50 percent of an existing bakery's flour inputs and will not support starting up new bakeries. Applicants must justify all flour contributions, and how filling a gap for the short/medium term will improve food security in vulnerable populations. To prevent creating dependence of USAID/FFP inputs (i.e., flour and yeast), USAID/FFP requires an exit strategy of all bakery programs.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Approach

Whole of Syria-based approach: In FY 2018, USAID/FFP shifted its approach to a Whole of Syria (WoS) platform, to increase flexibility and adapt to dynamic conflict lines and current regulatory challenges. Previously, awards were based on country platforms (i.e., Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, etc.). Awards still require an operating base but can, with the necessary justification, have multiple operational bases. USAID/FFP expects applicants to clearly detail remote management techniques, monitoring and evaluation, and beneficiary feedback mechanisms. Applicants must define geographic areas of operation and flexibility with clear criteria to determine geographic needs, shifts, or expansion.

Harmonization of food assistance modalities: USAID/FFP prefers country-wide harmonization of food assistance modalities including local and regional procurement of monthly food baskets, ready-to-eat rations (RTER), food vouchers, and cash-for-food as fully described in USAID/FFP's FY 2019 APS. Modalities should be aligned with Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSL Cluster) recommendations and with the geographically relevant survival minimum expenditure basket (SMEB) recommendations. USAID/FFP requires coordinating food baskets and RTERs with FSL Cluster specifications, contents, and packaging to strengthen our ability to manage and oversee assistance, reduce costs, and ensure a *do no harm* approach. Standardization eliminates comparisons of food parcels across different areas and perceptions of preference or politicization based on geographic location. Experience working on food assistance programs over an extended period of time in Syria is preferred.

Beneficiary targeting and accountability to affected populations (AAP): USAID/FFP supports the FSL Cluster standard operating procedures (SOP) agreements with local authorities to ensure distributions are free of political influences and are based on transparent vulnerability criteria. Applicants should demonstrate effective mechanisms to inform on AAP concerns including communication and outreach, issues/questions on distributions, basket contents/quality, monitoring, and targeting. Applicants must clearly articulate their methods and systems for conducting vulnerability analyses, beneficiary targeting, and post-distribution monitoring. Applicants should be prepared to undertake 100 percent beneficiary verification.

Humanitarian assistance distinction and added value: USAID/FFP recognizes the stabilization and livelihood activities by non-humanitarian donors and organizations across Syria. Applicants should be well informed of other activities—under implementation and under consideration—to avoid redundancy. In addition, USAID/FFP-supported humanitarian activities must be clearly distinct from stabilization programs, particularly for beneficiary populations who are not expected to understand distinctions, and must show an added value in areas of overlapping activities such as livelihoods, multipurpose cash, bakery programs, etc. For guidance on eligible humanitarian food security activities refer to the current APS.

Risk Mitigation Guidance

As described in USAID/FFP’s FY 2019 APS, all applicants are required to complete an analysis of risks as it relates to the proposed modalities and relevant mitigation measures. Specifically, the assessment should examine potential risk related to fraud, corruption and mismanagement. For more detailed information on this requirement refer to the *Organizational Risk Assessment* in the FY 2019 APS.

Additionally, USAID/FFP acknowledges that programming in Syria entails risk. In order to ensure that USAID/FFP-funded programs in support of the Syria response may be implemented successfully, mitigating risks to the greatest extent possible, see USAID/OFDA’s supplemental information on risk mitigation measures organizations should include in proposals for assistance for Syria programming. Applicants should review the [USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines Risk Assessment and Mitigation Requirements for High-Risk Environments](#) which are intended to provide supplemental guidance to applicants on addressing risk mitigation measures in proposals for programming in Syria. All applicants are expected to incorporate independent third party monitoring as part of the risk mitigation measures in proposals.

USAID/OFDA Proposal Guidelines Risk Assessment and Mitigation Requirements for High-Risk Environments can be found here:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/USAID-OFDA_Risk_Mitigation_May_2018.pdf

Local and Regional Procurement Guidance

As per the current APS and FFPIB 16-01, USAID/FFP prioritizes procurement in developing countries. Consequently, all local, regional and international purchases must procure commodities with both source and origin in countries listed in the “Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories” level or below on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients list of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) unless the country in which the commodities are to be procured is itself impacted by the same crisis. A commodity’s source is the country from which the seller ships the commodity, and origin is the country in which the commodity was produced.

See FFPIB 16-01 for further details on USAID/FFP’s policy on source and origin and USAID/FFP’s complementary Syria Guidance for LRP in *Annex I. USAID/FFP Source and Origin Restrictions for Syria*.

Application and Submission Guidance

This guidance is intended to be supplementary to the *Application and Submission Information* found in the FY 2019 APS.

Concept note submission: Applicants may discuss concept papers with USAID/FFP Field Officers prior to official submission. For contact information for USAID/FFP field based contacts please email FFP.Syria.DC@usaid.gov. As per the FY 2019 APS guidance concept papers should be submitted online through the Food for Peace Management Information System (USAID/FFPMIS). FFPMIS can be accessed at <https://usaid-ffp.entellitrak.com/>. All applicants, including those applying for a funded extension or a modification of existing FFP-funded emergency project, must submit a concept note for consideration. All documents submitted should be in accordance with the format detailed in the FY 2019 APS.

Application submission: If invited to submit an application, applicants should submit the application to FFP.Syria.DC@usaid.gov prior to submission on FFPMIS for review. USAID/FFP will determine when the application should be uploaded to FFPMIS and then will send the applicant a request to upload.

Award decisions will likely be made in mid-calendar year, subject to the availability of funding. The application process has been designed to minimize the time needed for award approval. However, given the complexities of the Syrian crisis please expect a longer than usual review period. Please note, there is no time limit or approval deadline associated with the Syria application review process, USAID/FFP will make award decisions as quickly as possible. In addition, USAID/FFP reserves the right to fund none, part of, or all of the applications received.

ANNEX I. USAID/FFP Source and Origin Restrictions for Syria

The Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) would like to provide a guidance update on source and origin requirements for food commodities procured locally, regionally, and internationally specific to the Syria Crisis. This guidance is complementary to FFPIB 16-01.

Definitions

Source: A commodity's source is the country from which a commodity is shipped by the supplier.

Origin: A commodity's origin is the country in which it was grown or produced. If a commodity undergoes processing which creates a commercially recognized new commodity that is significantly different in basic characteristics or in purpose of use (e.g., wheat flour or vegetable oil), the origin is defined as the country in which the commodity was milled/refined/processed.

Per the above, wheat flour has different characteristics and is used differently than the grain. Therefore, the action of producing wheat flour produces a new commodity.

Restrictions

Procurements under USAID/FFP programs must comply with both sets of restrictions.

Geographic Restrictions – Food commodities under USAID/FFP programs must be sourced and originate either from within the country in which they will be used (e.g., locally) or in a country that is within the same continent (e.g., regionally). For the purposes of the Syria regional response, USAID/FFP considers North Africa to be part of the broader “Asia and Near East” region. Commodities that are not sourced and produced within the Asia and Near East region (e.g., international procurements) will generally not be allowed under Syria LRP awards in the absence of a waiver.

Developing Country Restrictions – USAID/FFP prioritizes procurement in developing countries. Therefore, USAID/FFP policy is that—in addition to regional requirements—commodities must also have source and origin in countries that are listed at the “Lower Middle Income Countries and Territories” level or below on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of Official Development Assistance (ODA) Recipients (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>). This restriction does not apply to countries that are receiving emergency assistance for the crisis to which a program is responding. Thus, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey are valid source and origin countries for this response.

Waiver

If for any reason a project cannot be implemented under these restrictions or would have to be delayed at the expense of providing urgent life-saving assistance to vulnerable crisis-affected households, please notify the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) for your award in writing as soon as possible to request a waiver.

Note that the waiver request will require a management review within USAID/FFP. Please provide the following documents to request a waiver:

1. An itemized list of commodity type, quantity, and intended source and origin locations.
2. A clear justification documenting why the commodities cannot reasonably be procured in a way that would meet operational needs under USAID/FFP's policy restrictions.
Supporting details might include insufficient availability on local/regional markets, inability of local production to meet quality requirements, or exorbitant discrepancy in cost.

Source	Origin	Geographic Restrictions
· Local	· Local	
· Local	· Regional	
· Local	· International	· Not allowed unless a waiver is provided by USAID/FFP
· Regional	· Regional	
· Regional	· International	· Not allowed unless a waiver is provided by USAID/FFP
· International	· Internal	· Not allowed unless a waiver is provided by USAID/FFP

Example list of countries that fall within the USAID/FFP procurement policy as of January 2019. Please consult the OECD and apply the restrictions prior to every procurement.

Local Procurement

1. Syrian Arab Republic

Regional Procurement (Asia and Near East)

2. Afghanistan
3. Armenia
4. Bangladesh
5. Bhutan
6. Cambodia
7. Egypt
8. Iraq
9. India
10. Indonesia
11. Jordan
12. Kyrgyzstan

13. Lao People's Democratic Republic
14. Lebanon
15. Mongolia
16. Morocco
17. Myanmar
18. Nepal
19. Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip)
20. Pakistan
21. Philippines
22. Sudan
23. Sri Lanka
24. Tajikistan
25. Turkey
26. Uzbekistan
27. Vietnam
28. Yemen